3: Muhammad G-3 (ca. 1900) 1907 AV3 Dard AV3

VII.

Omens.

Probably on account of the frequent attacks on Gilgit made by the chiefs of the surrounding States, certain signs and occurrences are considered to be omens among the Gilgitis. They are as follows :—

(1) If an unusually heavy rain falls at any season in Gilgit, it is supposed that the chief of Yasin will advance towards Gilgit.

(2) If innumerable kites are seen hovering over Gilgit, it is generally accepted that Gilgit is to be invaded by the Nagar people.

(3) If packs of wolves make frequent night visits into Gilgit, and inflict heavy losses among the flocks, it is affirmed that the chief of Hunza is certainly going to invade and plunder Gilgit.

(4) If the harvest be unusually abundant, it is believed that Gilgit will be attacked by the Punyal Chiefs.

VIII.

Lunar Eclipse.

The Gilgitis say that Grahn is the name of a giant, who is a lover of the moon. On the 14th of the lunar months, when the moon is in its full beauty, the Grahn, whenever he pleases, catches hold of the moon, leaving untouched only a part which contains a fig tree. At such time the people of these parts beat their iron pans (on which they cook bread) like drums and cry loudly, "O Grahn, we have brought a large force, beating drums against thee, leave her (the moon), or we will rush upon thee?"
In the meantime the eclipse ends, and they become happy at their success.

Solar Eclipse.

The Gilgit people say that whenever any good king dies or is banished from his country, the giant Grahn becomes angry against the sun, and darkens a whole or a part of his (the sun's) face as a sign of grief for the death or the banishment of such a good king.

IX.

The Creation of the World.

It is said that the earth was at first enveloped in water, which was at some places frozen, and where some Yaths (giants) had taken their abode under Yamlo Hal Singh, their ruler. On a certain day they held a council for the purpose of bringing earth over the water. Their ruler said that the task was above their power but, however, he knew of a wolf called Bojare Shal who lived at a place named Milgamok (old ice) and who, owing to his great genius, would be able to perform this work. "Provision[1]," was first sent as a messenger by the Yaths, but the wolf refused to come, saying that he would not

[1] [In answer to a question regarding this name, the author of the paper informs me that the original word is *rayi*, which may also mean "fortune."—Ed.]

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000 in the colloquial. Dr. Leitner has collected a large number of Shina songs.

538 Oral traditions and genealogies are also preserved in families to whom this duty is assigned, and carefully handed down from father to son.

411 The ancient weapons were bow and arrows, battle-axe and round leather shield. Those able to afford it also wore a shirt of mail and a steel cap. The bow and battle-axe have been replaced by matchlock and sword, but are not yet quite obsolete. Though powder is easily made, the tribes have to depend on Cashmere and Badakhshan for matchlock barrels, so Robin Hood's weapon is still used in the chase. The bows are made of strips of ibex horn, softened in water and bound together, and are very tough, powerful weapons. The battle-axes are of different shapes, according to locality, some of them being inlaid with silver, or having engraved [585] patterns on them. The old weapons are carefully preserved and produced on the occasion of weddings, which would not be thought complete without them. A bridegroom presenting himself at the house of his father-in-law elect without a battle-axe would be sent away to get one, and if unable to do so would have to make an extra payment. In the present day the men of Chitral are noted for their swordsmanship, which has gained many a victory over matchlocks. In 1852 a regiment of Goorkhas in the Maharajah of Cashmere's service were cut to pieces by Chitral and Yassin swordsmen within 3 miles of Gilgit, though they formed square, and tried to reach the fort from which they had been cut off, in that formation.

726 Dard warfare is, however, seldom of a very resolute nature, and their records are full of accounts in which two or three days' skirmishing has led to the defeat of one party or the [713] other with the loss of a few men only. Every village has one or more forts according to the number of inhabitants, in which all can take refuge in case of need. Owing to the easily defensible nature of the country, surprise is absolutely necessary to success. An attack having been determined on, every effort is made to throw the enemy off his guard, and then, by a succession of forced marches, possession is gained of the pass or the narrow part of the valley which forms the key of his country. Should these be gained, the inhabitants of the invaded country take refuge in their forts. Their defence then depends almost entirely on the state of their supplies. Sometimes their water-supply is

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726 cut off or their stores fail, and they are obliged to make terms. On the other hand, if they are well supplied, the invader gets tired after a short time and retires. If they feel strong and confident, the garrison sallies out to offer battle outside the walls, but the taking of a fort by assault is unknown. On account of the supplies it is usual to plan an attack for the time when the standing crops in the invaded country are just ripe.[1] The store in the fort is then at its lowest, and the invader finds no difficulty in subsistence.

D
805 Though Islam has introduced the inconvenient Mahommedan calendar, the ancient method of computation by the sun is still in use. In Gilgit and the valleys to the south
[177] the months are now distinguished by the Arabic names of the zodiacal signs. In Hunza and Nager a more ancient nomenclature still exists, as it did till lately in Gilgit, though most
B of the names in the latter place are now lost. The year is
805 divided into two seasons, from solstice to solstice, called "yôl" (Boorish) and "hallôl" (Shina). The season commencing at the winter solstice is called "baiy," and the one commencing at the summer solstice "shini." Each season is divided into six months, the names of which are repeated in each season in a different order; the second season beginning with the first month, and then the other names being taken backwards. The months are named from certain objects or fancied resemblances on the horizon behind which the sun sets at certain dates, as seen from the gate of the ruler's castle, so that each place has a different set of names for the month. The calendar as it still exists in Nager will give a sufficiently good idea of the system.

The months are as follows, commencing with the winter solstice:—

1. Baiy Isha.
2. „ Gamoosa (*ice-sun*, the sun sets behind a glacier).
3. „ Tikkidir, (*earth line*, the sun sets behind a level space).
4. „ Kabula, (*kibla*, the direction of Mecca).
5. „ Hingbalter (*door-way*, from a rock resembling a gateway).
6. „ Booye (*shoulder-blade*, from a rock resembling the blade bone of a sheep).
7. Shini Isha (commencing with the summer solstice).
8. „ Booye.
9. „ Hingbalter.
10. „ Kabula.
11. „ Tikkidir.
12. „ Gamoosa.

[1] "The time that kings go out to battle," 2 Chron., XX, 1.

4: Durand G-3 (1888-93) 1900 AVI Kashmir
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181 The Shin is enterprising, manly in character and in perseverance. They are men of fine enough physique, but they are soft, and have little or no warlike instinct.

[511] Very much attached to their lands, they will not move except under official pressure or the compulsion of the direst poverty. Half a dozen able-bodied men of one family prefer starving on a tiny piece of ancestral land to dividing their forces and taking up ample grants, distant perhaps but a few miles from

[661] their old home. The systematic oppression of their rulers, which deprived a man of much of the fruit of his labours, accounts in part for their attitude on this particular point, but, allowing for this, the race is sadly wanting in initiative. The Yeshkun is, I am inclined to think, a better man than the Shin, there is no doubt about his being a better fighting man, and the small caste or clan of the Ronu is the best of all.

[795] Taking the whole of Dardistan the inhabitants are not warlike, and in the southern portion alone, which is under the religious influence of the Mullahs of Swat, do you find fanaticism. The people are peaceful; there is none of the natural devilry, dash, love of war, and enterprise, which you find in the neighbouring Pathan, and they never have stood up, and never would stand up, against severe losses.

726 But that they could fight behind suitable defences I always felt was pretty certain, and we found this at Nilt. Centuries of desultory warfare have made them adepts at the art of field fortification, and awkward customers to deal with when on the defensive. In attack they are contemptible, and only dangerous when overwhelming numbers force disciplined troops on to the defensive, as at Chitral.

[The Shins -- Analysis]

4: Durand G-3 (1888-93) 1900 AV1 Kashmir
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Even then they would never push an attack home, it is always an affair of a ring of stone breastworks drawn tighter and tighter round the invested body, of incessant fire and perhaps mining, never of a stern open assault such as Pathans would deliver. From the soldier's point of view they are certainly not first-class fighting men. Their rulers alone are blood-thirsty, and that really from the accident of birth and of religion. Even among them, though you might find instances of ruthless severity such as must accompany succession in a Mahomedan state, you but very rarely found the cruelty of the savage who delights in the torture of his victim. It was generally a case of a short sharp shrift. Among the people murders are very rare, and are almost invariably the result of a slip on the part of a lady. By their own laws the resulting punishment, if inflicted under certain circumstances, is perfectly lawful, so that it can scarcely be called murder.

The great difference between the Dard and the Pathan cannot be better illustrated than by the condition of Hunza and Nagar after our fighting there in the year 1891. Within a day of the last fight which decided the short campaign, officers could and did traverse the country unarmed: Conway's mountaineering party wandered all over it six months later without the semblance of an escort, and not one single shot was fired at us after the power of the tribesmen had been broken. They "took their licking," and bore no malice, and within a year, from the very men who had fought against us, I had organised local levies who were ready to fight on our side, who turned out without hesitation when called on, and who did excellent work.